

March 6, 2015

TO: Finance Committee
Senator Art Linares
Representative Phillip Miller

FROM: Richard H. Smith, First Selectman

RE: SB-946 Section 26
Resident State Trooper Program Proposed Funding Increase

The success of the decades-long tradition known as the Resident State Trooper Program is a remarkable example of State / Local cooperation. The benefits that accrue equally to our municipalities and to the State as a whole are straight forward, transparent and easily quantifiable in fiscal terms. It is rare-perhaps even unique-in its fairness.

Towns too small to afford a police department gain a direct link to the legendary facilities and expertise of the Connecticut State Police-at 70 % of salary and benefits (*100% of overtime worked*).

I consider 70 % to be fair compensation for a fully trained, experienced State Trooper-and backed by the resources of the CSP as well.

The State gets a bargain, too. Resident State Troopers swell the CSP roster *at just 30 % of the cost of salary and benefits* per additional Trooper-and at no cost for town-related overtime.

Although the attention of Resident Troopers is focused on their assigned town, that same fully trained, experienced State Trooper augments the force of their local barracks when conditions demand extra staffing.

I urge you to consider the unintended consequences of an increase. Faced with a wide spectrum of rising costs, towns may simply opt out. Yet the CSP's responsibility to provide police services remains. Do they maintain staffing levels, but at the *added cost of 70 % for each lost Resident Trooper*? Or is the CSP roster allowed to shrink, stretching their capacity to adequately patrol an increasing number of non-Resident Trooper towns?

Obviously, the preference of the small towns is to maintain the present 70 % share of the Resident Trooper Program.

If it is the Committee's sense that some increase is necessary, I can assure you that members of COST and CCM would willingly meet to discuss a more affordable number.

My colleagues and I are well aware of the efforts to maintain a partnership between state and local governments as we struggle to recover from the effects of this recession.

I end my testimony by thanking the Governor and the Legislature for your efforts on behalf of our cities and towns to support a State budget that holds us harmless. Any reduction in state funding is inevitably reflected in the quality of life for the people we represent.